A SERMON

Preached at

NORTHAMPTON

AT A

VISITATION

October the 10th. 1694.

By *JOHN MANSELL*, Rector of *Furthoe* in the County of *Northampton.*

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61:07

To The Reverend

THOMAS WOOLSTY, D. D.

ARCH-DEACON

OF

NORTHAMPTON.

SIR,

GIVE me leave to repeat the firſt Anſwer I returned to that Obliging Complement, wherewith you ſoftned the Command laid upon me to make this Sermon Publick; which was, that hitherto it was mine, and I alone was accountable for all its Imperfections; but if it came forth under the Authority of your Name, it would become yours, and you would be ingaged in its Protection.

Be pleaſed therefore Sir to receive what is yours into your Patronage: And I hope the World will do me the Juſtice to allow, that howſoever I may have failed in any other part of my performance, yet I have given a very bold proof of my Obedience.

But Sir, That diſcreetly managed Zeal which you expreſs for true Practical Piety, together with that great Temper and exceeding Sweetneſs of Nature which appears in the ſevereſt Exerciſe of your Authority, as

they have in general procured you the Affections of your whole Clergy; ſo they have particularly ingaged me to pay this Teſtimony of my reſpect to your Place, and Perſonal Merit.

And if this poor Diſcourſe prove but as ſucceſsful in contributing to the advancement of Religion in the World, as it hath been in the kind acceptance of my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy: I have all that could be wiſhed, and more than could reaſonably have been hoped for, by

Reverend Sir,

Your moſt Obedient,

Old Stratford,
Octob. 22.
1694.

Humble Servant,

JOHN MANSELL.

A Sermon

A SERMON Preached at the VISITATION IN *NORTHAMPTON.*

1 Timothy iv. 16.

For in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thy ſelf, and thoſe that hear thee.

THE *ſaving* of Mens Souls out of that Univerſal *Chaos* of fallen Nature, wherein all was without Form, and void, and full of Darkneſs: Was a work that had as much of the God in it, as the firſt Creation of Humane Bodies out of the Duſt of the Earth. And though this great work was firſt ſet on foot in Heaven, and God himſelf firſt put his own Almighty hand

hand unto it, yet by an Act of the most condescending Goodness Man was in time admitted into an Inferiour Partnership of the Mighty Undertaking: And that not only, whilst every Man, as assisted by Enabling Grace, is to *work out his own Salvation*; and so that which was first the Free Gift of God, becomes the Work of Man too; But also, as there was a certain Order of Men instituted to carry on this Gracious Design, who were set aside, by Divine Designation, to take care of their own and other Mens Souls; and who by doing so should *both save themselves, and those that hear them.*

Servat Deus nos sed non sine nobis. Ar.

In this Epistle St. *Paul* Preaches particularly *ad Clerum*: So that the whole may be looked upon as one short, but very full *Visitation Sermon.*

In the words immediately before the *Text*, He presents the Clergy with a brief Summary of their Duty, under those two heads, their Doctrine and their Manners: *Take heed to thy self*; that is, to thy own Life and Conversation; and *take heed to thy Doctrine*; that is, both how and what thou teachest, that the sound and useful Truths of the one may receive an experimental proof from the bright Example of the other; That their most Powerful Sermons being only Instructive Comments upon their own Holy Lives; They themselves living as they speak, as well as speaking as they would have others live; by that two-fold Rhetorick of their Living Doctrine, and their Speaking Lives, they may advance the Glorious Work of Mans Salvation.

But

But this Subject of Inſtructing the Clergy in their Duty, hath not been more often handled upon ſuch occaſions as *this*; then I believe it needleſs to be urged in ſuch an Audience as *this*: wherein, it becomes me to ſuppoſe the Reverend Hearers much better able to inform the Speaker, than the Speaker them. Setting aſide therefore thoſe words, *doing this*, which immediately reſpect their Duty, from the remaining part of the Text I ſhall obſerve briefly.

1. God's admirable Deſign in inſtituting the Prieſtly Order, it was to imploy it about the Salvation of Souls.

2. The extraordinary Honour of thoſe whom God imploys in ſo great a Work.

3. The Incomparable Reward propoſed to thoſe who acquit themſelves well in that great Imployment.

4. The Harmonious Order and Connexion between the Work, the Honour, and the Reward.

And all theſe parts ſeem to be ſummed up in in that ſingle word *ſave*: *God deſigned* to imploy them about the *ſaving* of Souls: It is their *Honour* to be imployed about the *ſaving* of others; and it will be their *Reward* to be *ſaved* themſelves; and the Method to be obſerved in both, is firſt to *take heed* to the *ſaving themſelves*, that ſo they may the more effectually *ſave thoſe that hear them.*

1. Then

1. Then we have God's deſign in inſtituting the Prieſtly Order, the Miniſterial Function, it was to imploy it about the Salvation of Souls: And he was pleaſed betimes to diſcover this Gracious Deſign of his to the World: For if we look back to the Original Inſtitution of the Prieſthood, we ſhall find that *Adam* the firſt of Men was the firſt of Prieſts alſo. And though it may paſs in the Number of Problems, whether there was to have been any certain Order of Prieſts in *Paradiſe*, ſince there would not have been any occaſion for ſome particular Perſons being imployed between God and other Men: But as it will be in Heaven hereafter, ſo probably it would have been in that lower Heaven upon Earth, all would have been Kings, and all would have been Prieſts: Neither the Regal nor the Sacerdotal Power, as it is likely, would have found any place in that Equality which was neceſſary to make even *Eden* it ſelf *equally* a Paradiſe to all Men.

But waving this Speculation, it is certain that Man no ſooner fell than the Prieſthood roſe; God in his very firſt Diſcourſe with guilty *Adam*, not only, as it is plain, revealed the Eternal Prieſthood of his Holy Son Jeſus; but, as it is more than probable, inſtituted the Prieſtly Office amongſt Men too. And though we can trace no foot-ſteps of any one Mans Offering Sacrifice for another in the *Antidiluvian* World, the Two Eldeſt Sons of *Adam*, each offering his own Sacrifice; as if in Conformity to the Paradiſical State every Man was ſtill to be his own Prieſt; and the firſt Notices we meet with

with of a contrary cuſtom was at *Noah*'s coming out of the Ark, where indeed he Sacrificed as a Publick Perſon; yet from thenceforth we find the Prieſtly as well as Kingly Office, continued down in the Fathers of Families, *Omnes Primogeniti ex ſtirpe* Noah. All the firſt Born of the Line of *Noah* were Prieſts, as that Father obſerves. Until God was afterwards pleaſed to Eſtabliſh the Prieſthood in the *Tribe of Levy*: Which Family he accepted of, by way of Commutation, inſtead of the firſt Born of all the other Tribes. And at laſt in compliance to the groſs Conceptions of the *Jewiſh* Nation, he after the manner of Earthly Princes, fixed the Seat of his viſible Empire in his Temple at *Jeruſalem*; and there ſet forth his Revealed Religion with all the Pomp becoming ſo great a Majeſty: Making that Houſe his own Royal Reſidence, and the Prieſts of the *Aaronic* Order his Principal Miniſters of State, Adorning them with their particular *Inſignia* of Honour, and the Viſible *Regalia* of their Sovereign Maſter: Gold, Purple, and Embroideries, Jewels, Pretious Ointments, and *Arabian* Gums, Solemn Inſtruments of Muſick, and whole *Hecatombs* of Beaſts for Sacrifice, glorioufly contributing to the Magnificence of their Publick Services. And thus the Prieſthood ſtood even equal in State to the Crown, and long ſupported it ſelf in all that Grandeur; until God ſaw fit to remove thoſe πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα thoſe Elements at once both Rich and *Beggarly*, *Gal.* 4. 9. together with their Attendant *Statutes that were not good*, *Ezek.* 20. 25. that is, had no Eſſential Moral Goodneſs

St. Hierome.

Numb. 3. 12.

in them: And ſetting up a new Scheme of Religion as full of Plaineſs and Simplicity, as the former was of Awful State and Gaudy Ceremony: He ordained a new Order of Prieſts alſo; who, what they wanted in Outward Pomp, were to make it up in the Inward Gifts of the Holy Spirit. When the Church it ſelf, though it had no longer its Garments of *wrought Gold*, yet became the more *Glorious within*: And the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt inſtead of vieing with Earthly Princes in their Glory and Magnificence, more nearly reſembled their Bleſſed Jeſus in his Exemplary Humility. When *Shadows* ſhining and yet dark gave place to *Subſtances* more beautiful in their Naked Simplicity; and Types and Figures, though ſet off with all that was Gay and Glittering, made room for the things themſelves ſignified; and the Miniſters of the Goſpel Covenant were more Divinely conſecrated by that *Unction from the Holy one* ſpoken of, 1 *John* 2. 20. than the High Prieſt of old, upon whom and whom alone *the anointing oil of the Lord was poured out*, , *Lev.* 8. 10. Thus they became a *Kingdom of Prieſts*, as the moſt Antient *Hebrew* reads it, *Exod.* 19 6. or *Kings and Prieſts* as St. *John* ſpeaks *Rev.* 1. 6. referring to the *Targum* on the forecited place; or *a Royal Prieſthood* as St. *Peter* conforms his words to the *Septuagint* Verſion of the ſame, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. Though to do ſtrict Juſtice to thoſe Texts, it muſt be confeſſed, that they regard the whole Body of faithful Chriſtians; but yet they may in a more particular manner be applied to Chriſtian Miniſters, without putting much force upon the words.

In

In fine, God being now to be worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth, thoſe who attended his Publick Worſhip were to be Men of *Spiritual Underſtandings*, *Col.* 1. 9. and to pay to God no longer a Typical Ceremonial, but a *Reaſonable*, that is a Rational *Service.*

And thus we have traced the Inſtitution and the Eſtabliſhment of the Prieſthood: It is almoſt as old as the World, as Univerſal as Mankind, It has been the Honour of Princes, the moſt Antient of whom, by uniting the Sacerdotal and the Regal Power in their own Perſons, became truely *Patriarchs*; and in the moſt flouriſhing Empire upon Earth, the Title of *Pontifex Maximus* was thought an Additional Honour to that of Emperour. To conclude this head, and to ſpeak it greatly, it was an Office not Unworthy of Jeſus our Incarnate God; who to thoſe other Offices of King and Prophet was pleaſed to annex this of Prieſt too: *A Prieſt for ever after the honour of Melchiſedec*, *Heb.* 7. 21. And all this leads me directly to my

2. Conſideration, Namely, The extraordinary Honour of that Order which God imploys in ſo great a work as this of *Salvation*; when God from the beginning deſigned the Salvation of Souls, he reſolved to Imploy the Prieſthood in that Gracious Deſign, and thereby he highly honoured thoſe whom he ſo imployed: And this Honour doth particularly appear. 1. In the Subject Matter about which they are imployed: And 2. In the Glorious End to which all their Work was deſigned.

1. The great Honour of the Prieſtly Order appears in the Subject Matter about which they are Imployed: And that is Humane Souls, which certainly next to God himſelf, are the moſt Noble Subjects Men can be Imployed about: Thus the Miniſtry is ſaid to *watch for Souls*, *Heb.* 12. 17. Humane Souls the breath of God himſelf, his own Immortal Images, the Seat of the Rational Life, the Scene of Thought and Reflection. It being highly Unphiloſophical to ſuppoſe, that Life and Thought could ariſe from meer Matter, though ever ſo juſt-
Prov. 20. 27. ly modified, or ever ſo evenly put in motion: *This Candle of the Lord* lighted up in Man is the Exalted Subject about which the Prieſthood is imployed. A Subject nobler than what exerciſeth the Heads and hands of all the Buſie, Guilty Great Ones of the World; Greater than any that amuſes the Cabals of Politicians, or the Cabinets of Princes; greater than all that ingages the Ambition of Fighting Monarchs, or of Rival Kings; whoſe moſt weighty Concerns are meer guilded Nothings, if compared to the worth of one ſingle Soul; which we find to be ſet above the acquiſition of the whole World, *Matth.* 16. 26. and which does indeed infinitely excell all that the World looks upon with reſpect or wonder. For to take one of the Higheſt Inſtances, what are Victorious Generals, or Conquering Armies; though ſet out in all their Martial Bravery, and all the Glorious Terrours of ſucceſsful War? If compared to a Holy Man of God, to a Guide of Souls, kneeling and praying in the midſt of a Devout Congregation, whom he ſeems

to

to have inſpired with part of his own Devotion, whilſt performing thoſe Holy Offices that belong to his Sacred Function he *wreſtles mightily with God*, and offers a Holy *Violence* to Heaven it ſelf, which ſuffers it ſelf *to be taken by* that Zealous *force*. This doubtleſs is a Spectacle incomparably more pleaſing and agreeable in the Eyes of God, of Angels, and of good Men, than all the Criminal Triumphs of Humane Conquerors, though raiſed upon the Ruine and Devaſtation of Flouriſhing Provinces, the Aſhes and Rubbiſh of ſmoaking Cities, and the Carcaſes of Thouſands of Men, all Sacrificed to that Devouring *Moloch*, the Wild Ambition of one Reſtleſs Diſturber of the Worlds Peace and his own.

Whereas theſe *Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt*, for ſo his Miniſters are called, 2 *Tim.* 2, 3. theſe *Leaders of Gods People*: *Iſa.* 9. 16. theſe *Watchmen* over his Houſe, *Ezek.* 3 3. 7. Carry on the Mighty Work of Souls at no other Expence but that of Sin; at the Ruine of no other ſtrong holds but thoſe of Satan; and in ſhort, with the hazard of no other Blood but their own in times of Perſecution.

Neither is the Work of Souls only thus comparatively great, with reſpect to all beſides that is accounted great upon Earth, But it will appear ſtill more great, if we conſider the Almighty Maſter-Workman under whom the Miniſtry is ingaged in it: For it is Gods own Work, and therefore they are called Θεῦ συνεργοί, *Fellow-Labourers with God*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 9. and in ſum it was the Work of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, when humbled into Man; who therefore owns them to be his Fellow-Work-Men, all ingaged

ged to carry on that great Deſign that he himſelf firſt began; and *Able Builders* in that Fabrick of which he himſelf laid, as well as was, the *Chief corner ſtone*: Thus the Work of Souls being the Work of Heaven, the Work of God, the Work of Chriſt; to be admitted into ever ſo Inferiour a Coadjutorſhip of ſo Divine a Work, muſt needs be one of the higheſt Honours of which a meer Creature can be capable. But 2. This Honour of thoſe whom God imploys in ſo gracious a Deſign will appear more conſpicuous, when we conſider that great End to which all that Work of theirs is directed; and that is to *ſave* thoſe Souls about whom they are imployed: And this gloriouſly differences their Work from all others though about the ſame Subject: For though the Philoſopher buſies his Speculations about this greateſt of Created Subjects; yet it is only to inquire into its Nature and Operations, but not to advance it to the higheſt poſſible degree of Perfection and Happyneſs; Nay the Devil himſelf is buſie about Souls too, but it is only how he may deſtroy them. So that it is the Honour of the Miniſterial Function alone to be imloyed in the *ſaving* of Souls: And therefore St. *Paul* ſpeaks of his *ſaving his Countreymen*, *Rom.* 11. 14. and of his *becoming all things to all men that ſo he might by all means ſave ſome*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 22. Briefly theſe are the Inſtrumental, the Miniſterial, Saviours Propheſied of *Obad.* 21. *verſe.* Saviours therefore they may modeſtly be called, though of a much Inferiour Rank; Proper Inſtruments in our only Proper Saviours hands.

Tanquam Miniſterialem cauſam. Vorſt.

And

And ſo great hath this Honour of ſaving, though but of Bodies, been accounted; that the Emperor deſerved the Sirname of *Pius*, who ſaid *he had rather ſave one Citizen then deſtroy an hundred Enemies*: And the Generous *Romans* uſed to decree particular Coronets to ſuch as had ſaved a Citizen. And indeed of all whoſe Names are Inrolled in the Records of Fame, we find two ſorts of Men eſpecially Celebrated: One who by Conquering Nations gave beginnings unto Mighty Kingdoms, extending their Dominions as wide as their Ambition: And the other who by the wonders of their Vertue Succoured the Diſtreſſed, Protected oppreſſed Innocence, Depoſed Tyrants, and Exterminated Monſters; The buſineſs of the one was Deſtroying others to make themſelves great, the buſineſs of the other was to Expoſe themſelves for the Benefit of others. And whereas the firſt had the honour to be ſtyled Monarchs and the Founders of Empires, the latter were Intitled *Hero's*, and Canonized among their *Demy-Gods*: So well did wiſe Antiquity diſtinguiſh between the Deſtroying and the Saving Work.

But yet what is all the Honour of ſuch as Save only Bodies, and Succour Diſtreſſed States? If compared to thoſe Champions of Religion; theſe Hero's of our Holy Faith, who themſelves make it their great buſineſs, as God hath made it their Indiſpenſable Duty, to labour for the *Saving* of *Souls*. Which *Saving* of *Souls* is ſet forth, in Holy Scripture by very Lofty Expreſſions. *He that converteth*

teth a Sinner from the Errour of his ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins, James 5. 20. *He that winneth Souls is wiſe, Prov.* 11. 30. *Thoſe that turn many to Righteouſneſs ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever. Dan.* 12. 3. So Superlatively great will be the Honour of all ſuch as faithfully Labour in the Lords Vineyard, at preſent they appear like ſo many Subordinate Saviours in this Lower World, and hereafter they ſhall ſhine like ſo many Stars in the Everlaſting Firmament.

My 3. Obſervable was, The Reward which God has propoſed to the faithful diſcharge of this Great Work,

When God deſigned to Imploy the Prieſthood about the Salvation of Souls, he deſigned that it ſhould be as much to their own Advantage, as to other Mens; and therefore he pronounced that by *doing* this, by *taking heed* to their great Work, they ſhould *both ſave themſelves and thoſe that heard them*: Where you ſee the Reward is not only as great as the Work, but of the ſame Nature too. *Salvation* is their Work, and *Salvation* ſhall be their Wages: Which Salvation, if it be ſo very conſiderable in the Work, how much more conſiderable is it like to prove in the Enjoyment?

And this Promiſed Reward is two-fold in the *Text.* 1. *They ſhall ſave themſelves*: 2. *Thoſe that hear them.*

1. By *doing this they ſhall ſave themſelves.* A ſhort Expreſſion, but full of mighty Sence, Save themſelves!

ſelves! And what could more be added for their Encouragement? For what above Heaven can be propoſed to the moſt Holy Induſtry?

And this Encouragement muſt needs carry a much greater force with theſe, than with other Men; for their Studies and Imployments ought to make them the moſt proper Judges how great a Bleſſing *Salvation* is like to prove: Since this hath been the buſineſs of their Lives, for this they Read, for this they Meditate, for this they Watch and Pray and weary out themſelves, to make ſome, though Imperfect, Diſcoveries of Heaven before hand, to meaſure as much as it is poſſible of that Infinity; to ſound, as far as it is poſſible, into that Abyſs of Glory; to comprehend before-hand as much as it is poſſible of thoſe Joyes, *which neither eye hath ſeen, nor ear hath heard, neither hath it yet entred into the heart of man to conceive*, what they ſhall be; only this they are aſſured of, that whatſoever they are like to be, they will be theirs in Exceſs: For we may rationally ſuppoſe that the future happineſs of good Paſtors will exceed that of moſt other Men: Not only becauſe they have been nearer to God in their Sacred Imployments, and done him more Valuable Service: But alſo as they are fitted and prepared for the reception of greater Bliſs. For as God hath all along ſuited his Commands to the preſent Capacities of his Creatures; ſo doubtleſly he will at laſt ſuit his Future Beatitudes to the Capacities of the Receivers alſo.

Those therefore who by a long course of Heavenly Exercises, and by a continued Ingagement in Holy Offices, have dilated and extended the Capacities of their Souls, are likely at last to obtain those higher degrees of Glory, that are fully suited to their enlarged Faculties; for though it is certain that all the Vessels of Mercy shall be equally filled with Glory, yet I look upon it as certain that all those Vessels shall not be of equal size; and it is plain that a more capacious Vessel when filled will receive more than a lesser Vessel though equally full. Faithful Pastors therefore, as having most exercised, and consequently most inlarged their Graces, will be capable of greater degrees of happiness; since they not only abound in all the Graces of other Christians, but in the additional Graces peculiar to their own Holy Function: And so come with a double capacity to receive those Rewards, which God without doubt will then proportion to the Capacities of the Receivers. So that if there be degrees of Glory hereafter, then certainly the higheſt Stalls of Honour shall be secured to those, who have faithfully *laboured in the Word and Doctrine*: And so Salvation will be more to them than to other Men.

When from attending upon the Altars of God, they shall be advanced to those Seats that surround his Throne; from putting up Prayers and Supplications, the chief Work of the Ministry here, they shall be there preferred to the present Work of Angels,

gels, perpetual Praiſes and Hallelujahs; there to enjoy the Eternal Sabboths of their Reſt; to be made Kings and Prieſts for ever in the New *Jeruſalem*; and to wear thoſe Crowns upon their own glorified Heads, which they have ſo zealouſly recommended to the purſuit of others. But,

2. As they ſhall thus *ſave themſelves*, ſo they ſhall *ſave thoſe that hear them* too: And that is a mighty addition to their promiſed Reward: For ſuch Souls as theirs which have ſo long glowed with Divine Love, and breathed the moſt *fervent* Charity, muſt needs be ſenſible of the fulleſt Satisfaction to behold others happy as well as themſelves; Nay to behold others happy by their means. And O the generous, the God-like pleaſure! To ſee how many they have brought to Heaven along with them; whilſt they enter thoſe Everlaſting Doors in no ordinary State, but attended by throngs of followers, who ſhall all own their Holy Leaders, and all do honour to the Bleſſed Inſtruments of their great Salvation: Whilſt thoſe happy Guides double their own happineſs by the ſight of their followers; and ſhine the brighter for the addition of their Lights; whilſt they take their particular Share in every one of their followers Joys, and, if you will pardon the boldneſs of one Expreſſion, I would ſay, whilſt they ſeem to *tythe* their very happineſs, by partaking of all thoſe Joyes of which they have been the Inſtrumental Cauſes. Thus

doubly happy, both in themſelves and in their Flocks, they will ſeem to enjoy two Heavens in one. But,

4. And Laſtly, The Text preſents us with the Beautiful Order, and Harmonius Connexion between the Work, the Honour, and the Reward. *Do this* and thereby *ſave your ſelves*. *Take heed* to your own Salvation, and ſo ye may the more ſucceſsfully *take heed* to the Salvation of others. For it is too ſad a Truth, that he who neglects his own Salvation, is never like to take much care of other Mens: We muſt therefore begin with our ſelves, and like other young Artiſts make our firſt Experiments at home, before we can hope to work ſucceſsfully for others. And this ſame Order is obſerved in the former part of the Verſe, wherein the taking heed to our ſelves obtains the firſt place, before taking heed to our Doctrine; and that with all the reaſon in the World, ſince he, who has firſt taken all due Pains with his own Soul, is like to have both the larger Experience, and the tenderer Concern for the Souls of that Flock which God hath intruſted him to feed. Whereas they, who *take* little *heed to themſelves*, will in all probability *take* leſs *to thoſe that hear them*: Such though they may have ever ſo many other Accompliſhments, yet they will want the *one thing neceſſary*: They may perhaps ſtudy hard, and Preach plauſibly, for their Credit; but there will be little of Conſcience in the Caſe: they may hold the moſt ſaving Truths No-

Notionally for the honour of being Orthodox, but Duty will be very little concerned in all they do; ſuch may poſſibly be great Scholars, but by no means good Paſtors; They may Preach Themſelves, but not Jeſus Chriſt; who is beſt Preached by a Holy Life, and indeed is never well Preached without it: So that to theſe the words of the great Schoolman may not unaptly be applyed, though in a Sence differing from his own intention. *Sic attendunt Doctrinæ ut ſui curam negligunt*, they ſo aim at the honour of being Learned Men, that they neglect the greater of being Good Men; and ſo they do but improve their Excellent Parts, they are little concerned for the more Excellent Improvement in Chriſtian Vertues. But now the faithful Feeder of Chriſt's Sheep, whoſe Study is all in Order to practice, *Qui recte docet nec minus recte vivit, who lives what he Preaches*; he by beginning with his Life will proceed the more happily with his Doctrine, *Vt Doctrinæ non repugnat vita*, and takes care *that his Life do not contradict his Doctrine*, the groſſeſt Solæciſm of which a Preacher can be guilty. And this Method is obſerved again in *Acts* 20. 28. *Take heed to your ſelves, and to the whole Flock*: *To your ſelves* in the firſt place, and ſo ye will ſucceed the more effectually with *your Flock*. For alaſs it is matter of dayly and deplorable Obſervation, that the People are much apter to learn from one ill Action of their Preachers, than from a hundred good Diſcourſes; and we ſee them

Aquin.

Venatorius.

Calvin.

to

more ready to repeat the Failings of his Life, than the Excellencies of his Doctrine; and if the laſt be ever taken notice of, it is uſually but to ſlur the more ſly Reproach upon the former; He is a Rare Man in a Pulpit— but he is thus or thus out of it. This calls all the Sacred Truths we utter into queſtion; for all Mankind have that Natural *Logick* to conclude, that there is no great reaſon to believe him, who doth not much ſeem to believe himſelf: And indeed who can comfortably hope to be ſaved by him, that is himſelf like to be a *Caſtaway.*

Not as if the Efficacy of the Word and Sacraments depended abſolutely upon the worthineſs of the Inſtrument; Since it is certain that God both can, and oftentimes doth, ſave many by the Miniſtry of ſuch as are not likely to be ſaved themſelves: And without doubt *Judas*, at the Apoſtles firſt Miſſion, wrought as many Miracles, and made as many Converts as any of the others that were ſent.

But though God doth not alwayes bind himſelf to the moſt probable Means, yet all this is no thanks to the Unworthy Tool; though abundantly to his Glory, who can make ſuch Excellent Uſe of ſo improper Inſtruments: Whereas by all the Rules of Moral probability thoſe are moſt likely *to ſave them that hear them* who have firſt taken all neceſſary *heed to ſave themſelves*: And the whole, both Honour

Cui enim, cui ſimiles Dixerim Sacerdotes malos, niſi aquæ baptiſmatis, quæ peccata baptiſatorum diluens, illos ad Regnum Cœleſte mittit, at ipſa poſtea in Cloacas deſcendit? Greg. Hom. 17. in Evang.

Honour and Reward of the Miniſterial Function depends abſolutely upon this Method.

And now inſtead of taking upon me to conclude with a *word of Exhortation*; give me leave to turn it into a Congratulation. And O happy we my Brethren! Whom God hath ſo graciouſlyy admitted into the Meaneſt Share of ſo Divine a Work, a Work attended by ſo great an Honour, and like to be crowned with ſo Glorious a Reward: Happy we! whom God hath ſet apart for his own immediate Service; and to imploy us about the Salvation of others; that we are Commiſſioned to ſpeak to Men on the behalf of God, and to God on the behalf of Men; that to our care is committed the Conduct of thoſe precious *Souls for whom Chriſt died*, and that the deareſt Concern of Heaven is intruſted to our Management. But more happy we! if convinced of our own Happineſs, and warmed with a Holy Sence of our Sacred Imployments, we *take* ſuch *heed to our Lives and Doctrines* as may keep up the Dignity of our Divine Commiſſions; and ſo Live and ſo Preach that no Man may have Reaſon to deſpiſe us; but that we by Tit. 2. 15. faithfully heeding the Duty laid down in the *Text*, may ſecure to our ſelves both the Honour and the Reward propoſed in it; Still remembring that Heaven is our great Province, that Souls are the Noble Subjects which we are to work upon, that Salvation is the Glorious Affair in which we are imploy-

ed,

ed. Moſt happy we! if we can untie our Affections from all Lower, Meaner Ingagements, and leaving the eager purſuit of thoſe things to ſuch as have not ſo much of Heavenly Buſineſs on their hands; after the Moderate Proviſion for our own Families, (you will excuſe this ſhort Digreſſion) after the Moderate Proviſion for our *own Families*, which whoſoever doth *not provide for is worſe than an Infidel*: and I am not yet convinced that we are bound to Preach and Beg, or which would come to much the ſame thing, to truſt our neceſſary Maintenance to the Charity of ſuch, as are not like to be over Liberal in Voluntary Contributions, ſince they ſo much repine at our Legal Eſtabliſhments: But eſpecially our Gentlemen of Eſtates ought not in Juſtice to call us Mercenary, unleſs they will vouchſafe to take our Work upon themſelves, and ſo coming well provided with their own Patrimonial Poſſeſſions, they may if they pleaſe do the Work of the Lord *gratis*, and then indeed our Pains and Penſions may both be ſpared: But until then, it is moſt equal that thoſe whoſe Portions have been ſpent to prepare and fit them for this Imployment, ſhould find a Decent Livelyhood in it; that thoſe who *ſerve at the Alters ſhould* be maintained by the Altars; and that *thoſe who Preach the Goſpel ſhould live upon the Goſpel*; theſe *Labourers* being certainly as *Worthy of their Hire* as any others. But this care being thus moderately taken, and we not minding the *Maintenance* more

more than the *Altars*, nor the *Living* more than the *Goſpel*, nor yet working chiefly for filthy Lucre like meer *Hirelings*: But knowing that the care of our Selves and Families ought to come vaſtly behind the care of our Peoples Souls: Happy we! If we *take* ſuch *heed to our ſelves, and to our Doctrine as to ſave our ſelves*, and thoſe Flocks of ours that ought to be as dear to us as our ſelves.

And Happy You our Brethren of the Layity, for whom God hath made ſo Wiſe, ſo Gracious a Proviſion; and called forth Men ſo compleatly qualified for the Care of your Souls, and to carry on the great Work of your Salvation; God himſelf calls them your *Watchmen*, and his own *Angels*, teaching you thereby to look upon them as ſo many of your *Angel-Guardians*. Happy you therefore if you behave your ſelves neither Unworthy of Gods Care nor theirs; if you neither diſappoint God's Gracious Deſign, nor their Pious Endeavours: if you neither diſreſpect their Sacred Character, nor grieve their Righteous Souls by obſtinate and perverſe Refuſing their Inſtructions; nor yet put a ſlight at once both upon Gods Common Providence, and their Holy Labours, by lightly forſaking their Miniſtry meerly becauſe you *fancy* ſome others better. For the Eſtabliſhed Laws of every Chriſtian Land are Gods Common Providence in that Land; And if you Act

contrary to thoſe Laws, by ſeparating your ſelves from our Legal Aſſemblies, without being fully convinced that you cannot be ſaved in them, (and believe it no other reaſon will paſs either with God, or Wiſe Men; and they would be Bold Accuſers of the Brethren who durſt to charge us thus highly.) If you do thus, you affront Gods Providence by pretending to provide better for your ſelves, and are indeed grown wanton with too much Bread. But happy ſhould both *we* and *you* be, if we would both joyn to carry on that great Work which God deſigned for both our good; and both having that Heaven in our View which he has propoſed for both our Incouragements: *We* Zealouſly Leading, and *you* diligently following; *we* drawing you on with all the fervency of Words, and the more powerful Motives of Holy Examples; and *you* yielding your ſelves up to the force of that double Conduct, *we* following our Lord Jeſus, and *you* following us, God may be faithfully ſerved by us all, and all of us may be graciouſly accepted of by God; that ſo Heaven may be our Journeys-End, and Salvation our Mutual Entertainment, when *you* ſhall all be Prieſts as well as *we*, and *we* ſhall all be Great and Rich as well as the beſt of *you*.

And as we have both joyned, like Companions Guides and Friends, to go into the Houſe of the Lord together here below, ſo we may there be for

for ever United in Love and Charity; in Peace and Glory; in the Beatifick Viſion of our God, and in the Everlaſting Armes of that Jeſus *whom our Souls have loved: Keep we beſeech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual Mercy, and becauſe the frailty of Man without thee cannot but fall, Keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our* Salvation, *through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with thy Self and the Bleſſed Spirit be all Adoration, Honour, and Obedience both now and for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

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